

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims as shown below. A complete listing of the claims, including their current status identifier, is set forth below.

1. **(Currently Amended)** A method comprising:  
contacting a hepatitis C virus (HCV) nucleotide binding NS4B protein with a candidate agent and HCV RNA; and  
determining an effect of said candidate agent on:  
(i) [[a]] GTPase activity or [[a]] nucleotide binding **activity** of said NS4B protein;  
and  
(ii) [[an]] HCV RNA binding **activity** of said NS4B protein.

2-5. (Canceled)

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said candidate agent is a nucleotide analog.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said nucleotide analog is a non-hydrolysable nucleotide.

8-9. (Canceled).

10. (Previously presented) The method of claim 24, wherein said method comprises determining an effect of said candidate agent on HCV replication in a huh7 cell.

11-21. (Canceled)

22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 24, wherein said method comprises assaying said candidate agent on HCV replication in a liver cell line or primary liver cell.

23. (Canceled)

24. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising determining an effect of said candidate agent on replication of HCV.